

<i>Public Health Emergency Preparedness – After Action Report</i>	
Emergency Preparedness Tabletop Drill July 25, 2006	
County/Tribal Health Jurisdiction:	Madison
Completed By:	Jill Steeley
Date Completed:	July 27, 2006

“Wildland Fire in Virginia City”

Tabletop Exercise After-Action Report



**July 25, 2006
Community Center, Virginia City, MT**

GENERAL EXERCISE INFORMATION

Date of Exercise:

July 25, 2006

Location:

Exercise was held in the Community Center in Virginia City, MT.

Participants:

Jill-Marie Steeley – PH Administrator (**Facilitator**)
Molly Peterson – PH Nurse
Jane Yecny – Ruby Valley Ambulance, Search and Rescue
Ralph Hamler – Madison County Sanitarian
Dr. Roman Hendrickson – Ruby Valley Hospital
Al Kyles – US Forest Service
Margaret Bortko, NP – Round River Healthcare
John Bancroft – Ennis Town Council
Melinda Tichenor – Madison Valley Hospital Lab/ Citizens Corp Council
Shawn Christensen – Madison Valley Rural Fire District
Roger Thompson – Madison Valley UnderSheriff
Frank Ford – Madison County Emergency Management
Ted Coffman – Madison County Commissioner
Dave Schulz – Madison County Commissioner – Sheridan Chamber of Commerce
Janine Clavadetscher – Madison Valley Hospital DON
Tom Bart – Madison Valley Manor
Allyson Adams – Virginia City Mayor

Note Taker:

Julie Ingram – Beaverhead County Public Health

Observers:

Bob Fry – State of Montana DES/Livingston Fire
Frank Nelson – Madison County Commissioner
Dan Doornbos – Alder Fire Department
Scott McClintic – Madison Valley Rural Fire District #2
Joe & Wendy Husar – Alder QRU
Lewis Stahl – Madison County LEPC Chairman
Julie Dewey – Madison County Grant Writer/LEPC
Chris Orr – VC Fire Dept. & Madison Valley Rural Fire
Steve Orr – VC Fire Dept., Madison Valley Rural Fire, Madison County Sheriff's Deputy
Jim Clavadetscher – Madison Valley Manor Administrator
Sue Criswell – Ruby Valley Hospital DON
Linda Parson – Ruby Valley Hospital
Anne Bancroft – Ennis Citizen

Background:

This tabletop was hosted by the Madison County Public Health Department as an opportunity to bring together several different emergency response entities within the county. Participants were from public health, law enforcement, local fire departments, US Forest Service, hospitals, DES, nursing homes, ambulance, chamber of commerce, city government, county government, Citizens Corp Council, and private medical.

Exercise Synopsis:

On June 20, 2006 dry lightning causes 3 small forest fires in the Tobacco Root Mountains just outside of Virginia City. The smoke in the area causes severe respiratory complications and quickly overwhelms the two hospitals in the county. On July 2, 2006, the winds fuel the fire and threaten the town of Virginia City (VC). Fire #3 has spread to over 1400 acres. The EOC is opened and the evacuation process is started. By July 4, 2006, a very busy holiday in VC, the evacuation order has been given and two homes are burned in VC. All residents in VC as well as all tourists staying in VC are now being evacuated to Ennis and Sheridan. The Ennis School Gym has been opened as a shelter for the VC residents. Highway leading out of VC is backed up with traffic trying to evacuate. A volunteer food worker at the shelter comes down with severe diarrhea and vomiting. Several evacuees start to experience the same symptoms.

Exercise Objectives:

- ◆ Promote interagency collaboration and coordination
- ◆ Recognize the roles of public officials
- ◆ Identify training needs
- ◆ Identify available resources

DETAILS/CRITIQUE

The critique for today's exercise is discussed in this After-Action Report. The report focuses on three key areas:

1. Policy Needs
 2. Training Needs
 3. Available Resources
- ♦ Observations of all partners are outlined including strengths, deficiencies, comments from the discussion period described, and corrective actions detailed. This format is not all inclusive, and additional comments should be noted, as appropriate. The purpose of the report is to validate strengths as well as identify improvement opportunities for participating organizations.

1. Policy Gaps – Comments/Observations/Issues

OBSERVATION

It was clear the emergency preparedness planning had come a long way since the tabletop in September of 2004. Most agencies had policies to cover one or two areas brought up during the tabletop, and several of the agencies had many more than that.

DISCUSSION

Specific areas of discussion were as follows:

- Hospitals did have policies in place for surge capacity issues – how, when and where overflow of patients would go.
- There are policies in place for who opens the EOC and when.
- There are policies for who makes a Declaration of Emergency and when – also on calling DES at the State level.
- There is a policy need for town evacuations – each town would be responsible for writing, practicing and implementing this policy.
- There is a policy in place for fire departments at the local level to request mutual aid.
- At this time there is not a policy for evacuating animals.
- There is a policy in place for mandating an evacuation at the county level.
- There is a policy in place where people should evacuate to – depending on the situation.
- The Sheriff's Office has a policy for evacuating prisoners – and has MOUs with surrounding county jails to house the inmates until the evacuation order is removed.
- The nursing homes have MOUs in place to transport their patients via Harlow Bus company to surrounding nursing homes.
- There is not a policy for evacuating "special needs" populations – medically needy, homebound, etc.
- There is a policy in place for opening shelters – must have good air quality and basic sanitary needs.

- The towns need a policy regarding the dissemination of emergency information – how it will be disseminated and where.

CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN

- Each incorporated town within Madison County needs an Evacuation Plan: The Madison County Evacuation Plan was written as not only a plan for the county officials to refer to, but also as a template for the town's, schools, hospitals, businesses, etc. to refer to when writing their own plans. It is recommended the towns appoint a committee to write the evacuation plans so that different entities are involved. It is also recommended the towns conduct drills of this plan before an actual event.
- There is no policy on evacuating animals: Recent disaster/emergency events in the country have been proof that people will not evacuate if they can not take their animals, or know there is a shelter for their animals. If livestock is a means of living for someone, we cannot expect them to leave the livestock to die in a disaster. Therefore, the county and towns could write animal evacuation plans that would include how the animals are to be evacuated and re-location sites for the animals. The Humane Society is a good resource during an event, but would probably not be available for the first 48-72 hours, so plans should include what to do during that time.
- How to evacuate "special needs" populations: The County Department of Emergency Management is working with the Madison County CCC to put together a list of special needs residents. These people would include but are not limited to: medically needy, homebound, requiring oxygen, etc. Since there are liability issues – the county is hesitant to keep such a list. A suggestion from the CCC would be to ask the churches to make lists of special needs people that could be accessed during an event.
- Towns need a policy regarding dissemination of information during an emergency: It is important to get information to the general public without relying on TV, radio, cell phones or landlines. The Sheriff's Office will be inundated with emergency calls, so their phone lines should not be tied up with this kind of general information. This type of information may include: where to evacuate to, shelter locations, and lists of people that have been evacuated. Therefore, the towns should establish a place that this information will be posted for people to see. This place should be communicated to the residents of the town well before an actual event.

2. Training Needs - Comments/Observations/Issues

OBSERVATION

Training is an ongoing need in Madison County; however, several entities are making a nice effort to prepare for the worst. Below are some areas of training discussed during the tabletop.

DISCUSSION

Specific areas of discussion were as follows:

- There is a training need for evacuating medically needy.
- Once the resource list for Madison County is completed, all County employees as well as first responders should have a copy and should be taught how to navigate through it.
- Should the churches be asked to keep a list of special needs people and trained on how to help them during an evacuation?
- There is a training need for setting up a mass clinic.
- The towns have a training need to evacuate their residents.

CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN

- Evacuating Medically Needy: This could be something taught to the CERT people by physicians or first responders. It is important these people be put at the top of the priority list when evacuating, as their lives are generally more at risk.
- Training on the Resource List: Once completed the Madison County Resource List will be quite an overwhelming document. People that will be using it need to be taught how to quickly find what they're looking for. It also needs to be maintained by someone working for the County.
- Churches keeping a list of Special Needs People: Since there is a concern at the County level regarding liability and privacy issues for special needs people, and idea was brought to the table to have the churches in the county keep lists of special needs people in their area. If this is how Madison County chooses to handle these lists, then the churches need to be trained on how and when to contact these people during an event, and how to evacuate them to a safe place.
- Setting Up a Mass Clinic: Although the County has a Mass Clinic Annex to the All-Hazards Emergency Response Plan – it does not take the place of training to set one up during an event. This could be done as full-scale exercise (instead of a tabletop drill). Planning for this type of drill would most likely require a committee, and would need to at the very least include someone from the hospitals, first responders, fire, public health, DES and nursing homes.
- Town Evacuations: The towns are encouraged to write their own evacuation plans and drills would be an excellent way to train for an evacuation. Drills also provide a chance to see gaps in the plans.

3. Available Resources - Comments/Observations/Issues

OBSERVATION

We focused on available resources instead of resources that are needed in order to keep within our timeframe. Below are some of the resources mentioned throughout the tabletop.

DISCUSSION

- Harlow Bus Company has been written into the County Evacuation Plan as a resource to use for evacuating people. The Madison Valley Nursing Home also has an MOU with the bus company to use the buses as a way to transport nursing home patients to nursing homes in surrounding areas.
- Ennis Fairground would be a good spot for the Forest Service to set up camp, as it has power and restrooms and is close to Ennis and Bozeman.
- The Madison Valley Rural Fire Department has a truck that holds 3,500 gallons of potable water if the water supply is contaminated or unavailable.
- The National Guard, State Road Department and Highway Patrol are good resources to call to assist the Sheriff's Office with traffic control, closing roads, and keeping traffic moving.
- CERT is also a good resource for shelter management, traffic control, traffic control, etc.